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PRESS RELEASE

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The Sixth Annual Concordia Invitational Women's Basketball Classic gets underway, Thursday, November 24th at the Concordia Complex, 7200 Sherbrooke Street, West. And once again, the tourney will feature the best in Canadian Intercollegiate basketball, with seven of the eight teams nationally ranked in pre-season polls.

And for the first time, the host Concordia Stingers find themselves in the position of defending champions. While the Stingers have been hit hard by graduation and transfers, head coach, Mike Hickey is confident the West-end team will hold their own against Canada's finest. And one reason for Hickey's optimism is the improved play of Joyce Tarbet of N.D.G..

Joyce, who played basketball at Westmount High and then at Dawson College started the season as the team's sixth player, but received the starting nod this weekend in the Bishop's Invitational Tournament.

Six of the seven participating Canadian teams are ranked in the Starting Line-Up's top-ten list, including Laurentian University (1), University of New Brunswick (4), Bishop's University (5), University of Guelph (6), the host, Concordia University (7) and Acadian University (9). The lone American entry, Southern Connecticut State College finished sixth in the U.S.Nationals last season and are expected to be as strong this year. The remaining Canadian school, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivieres, is an experienced club which should make its presence felt, especially All-star forward, Claudette LeClerc.

The Classic opens with the Stingers meeting the Guelph Gryphons at 3 p.m. Thursday. The Gryphon coach, Karen Lee has put together an impressive array of talent in her second year of coaching, including national team member, Candy Clarkson.

Following the Stinger-Gryphon contest, the Southern Connecticut Owls will face the U.Q.T.R. Patriots in a 5 p.m. game. The Owls, who open their season with the Concordia Classic, hope to be as ready as they were two years ago, when they won the tournament.

The highly-touted Bishop's Gaiterettes go against the University of New Brunswick Red Bloomers at 7 p.m.. Wayne Hussey's crew includes Quebec team members Debbie Huband, Helen McAuley, Diane Murphy, Linda MacPherson, as well as Concordia transfer, Wanda Hines.

Thursday's final game will put the defending national champions, Laurentian Veas against the Acadia Axettes. Coach, Norm Vickery's squad has won three consecutive national titles and is led by national team members, Chris Critelli and Michelle Belanger. Laurentian has reached the finals of the Concordia Classic in each of its three appearances, and captured the tourney in 1974.

Thursday winners will square off in semi-final matches Friday night at 7 p.m. and 9 p.m., with the consolation games taking place Friday afternoon at 3 p.m. and 5 p.m.. A full slate of action begins early Saturday morning with Consolation games at 9 and 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., leading up to the Championship game at 3 p.m..

"It should be three days of excellent basketball, college basketball at its best," said Pat Boland, Concordia's Director of Women's Athletics. "The Laurentian Veas are undisputedly the finest women's team in the nation, having won three straight national championships, while compiling an over-all record of 85-5. Yet during those same three years, they have won the Concordia Tournament only once, losing in the final, two years ago to Southern Connecticut, and last year to Concordia, their only loss of the season. Coach Norm Vickery thinks that it's time he won again. Seven other schools are ready to take a run at the best."